

Electronic Filing News

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What's New on our ECF Website?

<http://www.mnd.uscourts.gov/cmecf/index.htm>

- **Redaction Procedures**—for both civil and criminal cases.
- **Increased PACER Fees**—Memorandum explaining the increased PACER fees.

National Statistics

- Over 59 districts are using ECF.
- Over 81,000 attorneys are filing nationally on ECF.
- By the end of 2005 all District Courts will be using the new case management software.

Phone Support



Keep your phone calls coming! The ECF customer support team includes employees in the Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth and Fergus Falls courthouses. We want to take your calls.

- During November-December 2004 we answered 1,100 calls.
- Each call averaged three minutes to complete.



Message from the ECF Project Team

Electronic Case Filing (ECF) is beginning to feel like the only way we've ever done business in the U.S. District Court. In a very short period Judges, court staff and customers have adapted to the new way of conducting business. The court continues to make changes to the event codes to ensure the ECF software is intuitive and easy to use. The court looks at the new year with plans to enhance sealed functionality for our customers on-line and continue our outreach to educate and communicate all ECF news in a timely manner. Thank you again for your support.

The E-Government Act

On December 17, 2002 President Bush signed into law the "E-Government Act of 2002." Among other things, The Act specifically outlines the type of personal identifiers such as social security numbers and dates of birth, that should be redacted from documents being e-filed in order to protect this information on the Internet. In addition to filing a redacted version an un-redacted version of the document (that includes personal identifiers) may be filed under seal without prior approval by the court. Information regarding these new procedures in civil and criminal cases are outlined on the ECF website. A reminder that the U.S. District Court is not responsible for redacting or protecting this information.

TAKE NOTE: Some firms have purchased redaction software to assist with this process and reported that the redacted information may be retrieved. The court recommends using the tools that already exist in your word processing software. Conduct a find/replace search



Technology Update

Time outs are not just for small children. In order for the ECF software to run efficiently it has built-in restraints for the amount of time that can be spent on each screen. Currently this amount of time is about 30 minutes. What does this mean for our filers? If you are filing a document with a number of attachments, keep an eye on the clock. After about 20 minutes of activity on a screen, even if you have not added all of the attachments, move on. Finish the filing in order to save the work you have done, and go back and file the remainder of the documents in a separate filing. This practice will save filers from experiencing the "time out" factor and the consequence of having to start the filing all over.



ECF Reminder Letters

Filers who filed in paper more than three times and still have not signed up for ECF, are receiving a new reminder letter. The letter explains that documents need to be filed on ECF or the filer must appear before a Judge at a show cause hearing.

Describe Documents

Many filings include additional attachments such as exhibits. The process for attaching documents



is three steps:

1. Use the "Browse" feature to find the document you wish to attach.
2. Describe the documents being filed. This is the area in which many filers are not completing properly or at all. Please make sure this step is not missed and the filer uses the drop-down box and/or description text box to fully describe for the Judge what "document" is being added.
3. Add the document by clicking the "add to list" button. Then browse to add additional documents if needed.

Firefox



Firefox, the latest web browser created by Mozilla was released for consumer use in November 2004. The United State District Court has been testing its use with ECF even though it is not one of the "approved" web browsers by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. With much success and a few minor glitches, many court users use this new browser to post electronic documents.

System Bug: With the latest upgrades to ECF, a new bug was recently discovered. If a filing has multiple documents to be viewed in the Notice of Electronic Filing, you may get prompted for the PACER login even if you did not view the document already. Enter your PACER password. Review your bill upon receiving it from PACER and make sure you do not get charged for viewing the documents. If you do please contact PACER immediately to discuss the reason for the erroneous charge. You can also call the ECF helpdesk and have an electronic copy e-mailed to you.